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REPORT ON CANADIAN ARCTIC ESKIMOS--SOME CONSEQUENCES OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLING.

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THE SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL, AT INUVIK IN THE WESTERN CANADIAN ARCTIC, ACCOMODATED 300 PUPILS DURING THE 1963-64 SCHOOL YEAR. MOST OF THE YOUNGSTERS KNEW NO ENGLISH, HAD NEVER SLEPT ALONE, AND HAD NEVER SEEN RUNNING WATER AT THE TIME OF THEIR FIRST TRIP TO INUVIK. THESE YOUNGSTERS ARE FROM TWO DISTINCT GROUPS--THE KABLOONAMIUT AND THE NUNAMIUT. THE KABLOONAMIUT, OR "PEOPLE OF THE WHITES," INCLUDE THE "TOWN RESIDENTS" AND THOSE WHO LIVE AND WORK ON THE DEW SITES. THE NUNAMIUT, "PEOPLE OF THE LAND," ARE THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE REMOTE AREAS OF EASTERN AND WESTERN SECTIONS OF THE MACKENZIE DISTRICT. LITTLE DISORGANIZATION RESULTS FROM THE BOARDING SCHOOL EXPERIENCES OF THE KABLOONAMIUT YOUNGSTERS, EITHER FOR THE CHILDREN, THEIR PARENTS, OR FOR THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH THEY LIVE. THIS ADJUSTMENT PROBABLY OCCURS AS A RESULT OF THEIR GREATER EXPOSURE AT HOME TO WHITE MAGAZINES, MOVIES, AND OTHER MASS MEDIA. BUT THIS IS NOT TRUE OF THE NUNAMIUT CHILDREN. FOR MOST OF THEM THE SCHOOLING WHICH THEY RECEIVE TENDS TO BE DISORIENTING AND DISEDUCATIVE. AS A RESULT OF THEIR RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCES, THE NUNAMIUTS ARE MADE UNFIT TO LIVE IN THE LAND CAMPS WHICH ARE THEIR HOMES, IN TERMS OF ATTITUDES, MOTIVES, AND SKILLS. YET THEY ARE NOT ADEQUATELY PREPARED TO MAKE THE TRANSITION TO WAGE WORK IN TOWN. THIS ARTICLE APPEARS IN THE "JOURNAL OF AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION," VOL. 7, NO. 2, JANUARY 1968, PP. 7-17. (ES)

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Report on Canadian Arctic Eskimos:

Some Consequences Of Residential Schooling

Charles W. Hobart

STRATEGIES for the rapid acculturation of culturally deprived and/or minority group children have been the subject of controversy for at least the last century. The technological explosion apparent during the last two or three decades, the spread of automation in industry, the educational upgrading of the North American populace, the proliferation of mass culture, all tend to make this issue increasingly urgent today. This article describes the consequences of one program for rapid acculturation, devised for the education of Eskimo children in the Canadian Arctic.

This report's data were gathered on three trips to the Western Canadian Arctic made during the summer of 1963, the winter of 1963-1964, and the summer of 1964. A total of four-and-a-half months were spent in 11 locations scattered between the Alaskan border in the west and Spence Bay on the west coast of the Boothia Peninsula in the east. During the course of these trips, 159 interviews were conducted. The largest number, 105, were with Canadian Eskimos, parents of children in schools and their children. Fifty-four interviews were with whites who had had numerous opportunities to observe children in or out of school, or adults following the termination of their schooling. In addition to interviewing these various kinds of informants, a great deal of time was spent observing classrooms in session, children and young people in their home communities, etc.

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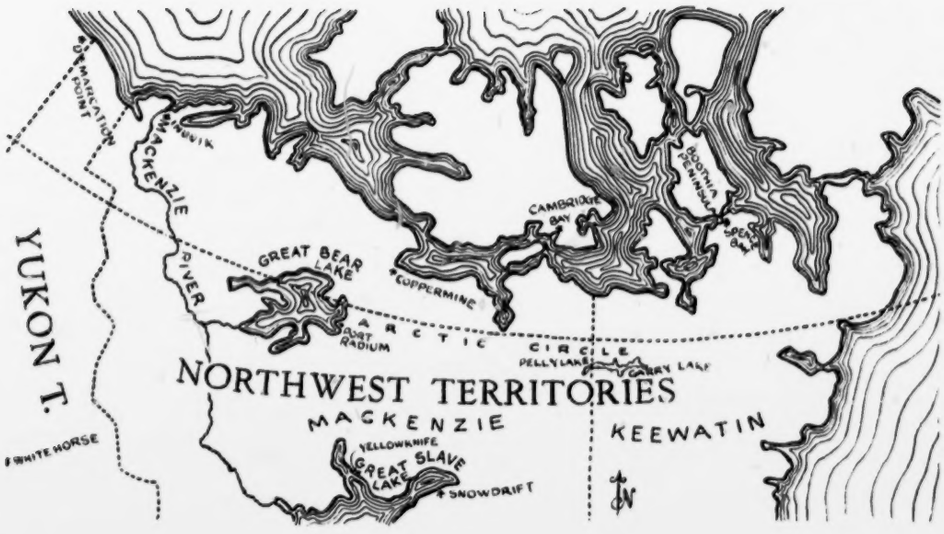
The School System in the Western Canadian Arctic

During the school year 1963-1964, there were 818 Eskimo children between the ages of 6 to 18 in the Mackenzie District, which comprises the Western Canadian Arctic. The schools are operated by the Education Branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. Four hundred and sixty-five of the children were in ten day schools in their own home communities and the remaining 353 were



in residential schools. The largest group of these, 300 or so, attended the Sir Alexander Mackenzie school at Inuvik, on the Mackenzie River Delta.

For those who were in day schools, the experience was little different from children in the Canadian provinces. The recently built, well-equipped buildings are comparable with those attended by rural white children in consolidated districts. The Eskimo child's classmates are usually children with whom he has grown up. The scene that he observes out the school window is a familiar one; the noises are all well-known; and the people moving around outside are people he has known as long as he can remember. Even the language problems of many Eskimo children are paralleled by a weak mastery of English by many "new Canadian" children.

However, for the child who attends the Inuvik school and lives in the hostel, it is a much different story. Some are only six years of age when they are flown as far as 800 miles to the residential school at Inuvik, from the tiny settlements and the hunting and fishing camps in which they lived "on the land." At the time of their first trip to the Inuvik school, most of them knew no English, had never slept alone, and had never seen running water. Many of them were used to a diet composed very heavily of meat—much of which was eaten raw. Many had never seen an assemblage of more than 60 or 70 people. Some yet lived in snow huts in the winter time.

The school facility and the educational program to which they came at Inuvik are indistinguishable from those provided in southern Canada

for white Canadian children. The dormitory has modern bathrooms with running water and is heated to white standards of comfort—which is entirely too warm by Eskimo standards. The children sleep between sheets in their own beds in large rooms, housing between 60 and 75 children. The meals served in the dining rooms are excellent by white middle-class standards. There are no concessions made to Eskimo tastes in the menus. Reindeer meat was served at times because it was easily available, but it was cooked in the same ways that whites would cook beef. Children are issued clean new clothing as needed, which was of southern Canadian style. A full set of recreational facilities and equipment is also available, including ice hockey equipment and rinks.

The instructional aspects of the program are equally easily summarized. The curriculum in use, the Alberta curriculum, was designed for white Canadians, and has a pronounced middle-class bias. No systematic modifications are made in this material in the Inuvik school, nor are teachers free to make substitutions from other curriculum materials if they wished to.

The teachers are regularly certificated teachers who lack any special training for the teaching of "culturally deprived" and initially non-English speaking children. They sign two-year contracts and the majority of teachers return south after the termination of this two-year term. Thus at any one time most of the teachers have had little experience with the peculiar teaching problems which they faced in their classrooms.

Consequences of the Residential School System

The attempt to describe comprehensively and accurately the consequences of such a varied and complex experience as education at the residential school at Inuvik is made difficult because of (A) the variety of possible consequences, and (B) because each consequence will differ with the background situation of the child. A word needs to be said about each of these.

(A) There are four possible kinds of changes which a child moving from an Eskimo settlement to a boarding school, and back, might experience. There may be (1) physiological changes in the way his body functions, (2) social psychological changes in his sense of personal security, his attitudes and motives, his way of relating to other people, (3) changes in his moral conceptions, in what he will and will not do, and in (4) non-moral cultural changes—changes in the skills, abilities, and in his expectations of life. Changes in each area will be summarized.

(B) The 1,200 mile sweep of the Arctic coast from Pelly Bay in the east of the Mackenzie District to Demarcation Point on the

Alaskan boundary in the west is not a homogeneous area culturally speaking. Even Eskimos themselves in the western end of the coast distinguish between easterners, whom they call Kagmaliks, and their own people whom they call Innuit. These groups differ in white sophistication and acculturation, with those in the east the least sophisticated and those living in the Delta the most sophisticated. But the Delta people include bush dwellers and town dwellers. The Arctic Coastal people to the west of Bernard Harbor are more likely to know English because some have attended one of the old mission schools for at least two or three years. But they generally follow a traditional pattern of subsistence living on the land, excepting those working in communities like Cambridge Bay or DEW sites.

Our data do not justify attempting to distinguish between the responses to the boarding school situation of children from the many distinctive groups. Instead, following the usage of Vallee in his *Kabloona and Eskimo in the Central Keewatin,*[1] we shall distinguish two groups: the Kabloonamiut and the Nunamiut. The Kabloonamiut, or "People of the Whites," include the "town residents" and those who live and work on the DEW sites. Their wage-earning occupations, and living arrangements, the disciplines to which their lives are incessantly subjected, and the kind of fare that they eat all point to their orientation toward a "white-like" way of life.

Under the heading of Nunamiut, "People of the Land," we shall include all of those who live on the land, whether in the eastern or western areas of the Mackenzie District. Most of the informants who provided me with information on the Nunamiut children lived in the more remote areas of the Mackenzie District; thus, the discussion which follows reflects particularly the situation of children from these more remote areas of the Mackenzie District.

The Pattern Among the Nunamiut

Physiological Changes. There are two kinds of physiological changes which should be considered here: those due to changes in adaptation to cold and those due to changes in diet.

The interview data show that children who live in the hostels at Inuvik do become physiologically, as well as perhaps psychologically, adapted to the warmth and the diet which they experience there. In a high proportion of cases they suffer when returned from the "comforts" of the residential school to the cold and the all-meat diet typical of most of their home situations. There was no evidence of suffering when the reverse move was made.

Social Psychological Changes. By social psychological changes, we mean changes in the motives, attitudes and relationships of the Eskimo children as a consequence of their Inuvik schooling. Families in the more primitive settlements reported such changes much more frequently than families in more accultured surroundings. There are two reasons for this pattern.

(1) In primitive family situations there was a contrast between the comforts of the hostel and the privations of the home. The shock of transition was also greater from the home to the hostel, in the first place, as well as from the hostel back to home. These children have more reason for resentment toward their parents for subjecting them to this disturbing experience. Later they have more reason for resenting the claims of their parents when they are recalled to a home situation to be increasingly deprived in contrast to the school.

(2) Many of the problem behaviors of the returning children are quite characteristic of Kabloonamiut children, but not of traditionally-raised Eskimo children. Children in the less isolated communities have been exposed to more western influences, and they show some of the characteristics of white children. The Nunamiut parents have not encountered these behaviors before, however, and they have no experience in trying to cope with them.

The pattern of those behaviors is a coherent one, reported by two thirds or more of the parents in the Nunamiut settlements. It is the picture of an unhappy, dissatisfied, unadjusted child who was described as being "cranky"—a word used almost always wherever parents knew any English.

Disobedience and disrespectfulness are also reported in a high proportion of cases. A loss of respect for parents is an inevitable consequence of the child's schooling experience for a number of reasons. Perhaps the major one is that children discover that there are very many good things in life which are taken for granted, apparently, in the white world. Often the children come to appreciate luxuries which parents may have never heard of. In any case they are simply unable to provide them for the children.

Another reason for the loss of respect is found in the content of the curriculum. This curriculum is an almost exclusively white curriculum; the Alberta curriculum as noted earlier. No *distinctly* Eskimo content is included at all. Since what is taught is felt to be important, what is not taught must be felt to be unimportant. Thus, the curriculum clearly implies it follows that Eskimo learnings are just not important. When the children now discover that their parents are almost com-

pletely unversed in these white learnings, which they themselves know by the age of nine or ten, a major loss of respect for parents seems almost inevitable.

Two other social psychological changes, both closely related to the crankiness perhaps, may be noted: jealousy and fighting. Jealousy is precisely the attitude which we would expect to find in children deprived, at the early age of six or seven, of their mother's love and care. The incidence of fighting, reported by about one-third of the parents, must be understood in the light of the traditional Eskimo attitude toward fighting. In the area covered by this study, Eskimos abhor fighting and are trained from infancy to appease others. However, the children who returned from Inuvik do tend to fight. One reason is suggested by the Dollard frustration—aggression hypothesis.[2] Fighting may reflect the frustrating physical privations in their home communities which children no longer tolerate easily after experiencing "the good life" at Inuvik. It also reflects the breakdown of the traditional internalized controls against aggressive behavior in the school situation where the children are encouraged to be competitive.

Informants agreed that usually the longer a child was away, the more problem behaviors he tended to exhibit. Complaining behavior tended to die out in older children as they discovered that it simply did no good. But disrespectfulness, uncooperativeness, and disobedience tended to increase with age.

Changes in Morality

Under the heading of moral changes is included "sneakiness," lying, stealing, smoking, drinking, and premarital pregnancy. We shall emphasize the first three since they are offenses against traditional Eskimo morality.

Most observers of traditional Eskimo society in the central Arctic have noted the absence of dishonesty and stealing in the majority of Eskimo settlements. Both Eskimo and white informants agreed that one aspect of Eskimo education at Inuvik was learning to steal. The teachers reported that whereas stealing was unknown during the first few years of the Sir Alexander Mackenzie School, it had become increasingly common during the last two years.

About one-third of the parents reported an increase in "sneakiness," lying, or stealing in their own children. Note that the "sneakiness" and lying are the kind of response which one might expect, given the situation in which the children who have returned from Inuvik find themselves. Those with several years of residential schooling find that their parents cannot understand the situation in which the children

now find themselves, yet disapprove of a number of non-traditional aspects of the children's behavior. When one can no longer want to do or to feel as he is supposed to, and when others cannot understand why he does, the response is to sneak or lie. Thus one tries to appear to conform where one is not fully able to do so; this is a common response of the Eskimo children.

Cultural Changes

By cultural changes, is meant the changes in the skills, abilities, and norms of the children who attend the hostel school at Inuvik. We shall discuss academic or classroom instigated changes and popular cultural changes.

The children certainly learn the academic material required; they learn to speak, read, and write English, to live in a southern Canadian style setting. And yet one may question just how much the children generalize from what they learn. In many respects it appears that the children do not apply, at home, what they learn in school. They merely learn to "play two different games."

Such a two response, or "two game" pattern is what one would expect of children in the circumstances. It is no exaggeration to say that they experience two completely different modes of life in their home communities and in school, and the only tie between the two is an airplane ride. In these two worlds, the children speak different languages, wear different clothes, eat different foods, live in strikingly different facilities, have different associates, follow different schedules, encounter different discipline, and enjoy different recreations.

Given these differences, one would expect a minimum of carry-over from the one life to the other, and observation suggests this is often true. Nunamiut children home from Inuvik are sometimes unable to integrate English words with a previously known Eskimo melody. Girl graduates from the home economics training at Yellowknife very often keep their own homes with the same disorderly, dirty and unhygenic abandon as those who have not had such training. Their school training relates to a white world which they experienced as part of a completely different way of life, unrelated to their own homes.

Many of the potential benefits from academic training for these children are vitiated by the conflict they experience between the life for which school prepares them and the life their parents lead and anticipate for the children. Traditionally children have been the old-age insurance of Eskimo parents; one of the strongest traditional obligations of children was to aid their parents in hunting and fishing, when they became old enough to contribute to family subsistence. The age at

which such aid is expected has been increased somewhat by the schooling programs introduced by whites, but in many areas the expectation that aid will be given is yet a powerful one, strongly internalized by the children themselves. It is common for parents in the more remote areas of the Mackenzie District to send word to their children when they are 15 or 16 that they are needed at home to help, and the changes in Nunamiut children result from their exposure to popular culture in Inuvik, particularly the popular adolescent culture which their youngsters experience in boarding school. As would be expected, the Nunamiut children learn virtually the full content of the adolescent sub-culture found in provincial Canada: clothing, food, and musical tastes, dance steps; interests in sports, motion pictures, movie stars, rock bands, and "comic books."

There is an element of danger for Nunamiut survival in this tendency in the local adolescent popular culture toward wholesale acceptance of white patterns and wholesale rejection of traditional Eskimo ways. The Eskimo styles are adequate to prolonged exposure to bitter cold; the white "black leather jacket style," which is very popular, is not. Young people who return to native settlements and enjoy a high status because they are better educated, encourage the spreading of styles which can only jeopardize the survival of those who use them. This trend is already well-developed. There is a tendency to look down on caribou skin clothing, though experts agree that it is the most efficient cold weather clothing in existence. In areas where clothing skins are available, children come to school inadequately dressed because their mothers are both too lazy and too proud to make skin parkas for their children.

The Pattern Among the Kabloonamiut

The reports of the Kabloonamiut parents concerning their children's behavior differed radically from those of the Nunamiut parents.

Physiological Changes. Kabloonamiut parents almost never reported that their children suffered from cold or from dietary changes when they returned home from the hostels. The reasons were obvious. These parents are living on a money economy rather than on a subsistence economy and they lived in settlements where they had continual access to stores, or to the commissaries of the DEW sites. Their housing facilities were generally more adequate, better constructed and insulated, better heated and more spacious than were those of the Nunamiut. The foods that the Kabloonamiut child found on the table at home were almost exclusively store-bought white foods, whereas the Nunamiut child often had to make the jump to a virtually all-meat diet with no transition at all.

Social Psychological Changes. In general, rather than reporting an increase in crankiness, disrespectfulness, unhelpfulness, and disobedience, the Kabloonamiut parents reported that their children came back *more* mannerly, more helpful in performing household chores, and more obedient than when they went away.

There are several reasons for this striking and consistent contrast between the reports of the Nunamiut and Kabloonamiut parents. First, there are very consequential differences in the home situations in which the two groups of parents rear their children. The Nunamiut more often find themselves in a situation where they can indulge every whim of the child in the traditional Eskimo manner. The Kabloonamiut group, however, does have a greater abundance of white foods and other goods and is aware of the need to restrain the child either because of the child's welfare or the fragility of the goods. Thus, these parents try to restrain their children. But appropriate child controlling and disciplining techniques are not well practiced and understood among these people since they were not a part of traditional Eskimo culture and since they were not themselves raised in this way as children. Consequently the discipline which is imposed is sporadic and inconsistent: a mother lashes out at her child when she has had "all that she can take" and then, more often than not, she relents and permits the child to have his own way.

A second reason has to do with the community situation in which the children are raised. In the more primitive Nunamiut communities, the child tends to learn obedient, respectful, and helpful behavior from the example of age groups immediately older than he. The general conformity of the community, as a whole, is easily instilled in the growing child. In the more accultured settlements, however, there is no such consensus of socially constructive example from which children can learn. Rather there is confusion, inconsistency, and uncooperative, disrespectful, and even malicious behavior in those available to the growing child as role models. Consequently in the more accultivated communities, many Eskimo parents frankly cannot handle their children. The strict routinized formal controls of the hostels appeared to have a saluatory effect on the unruliness of such Kabloonamiut children. This was recognized, gratefully, by the parents.

Changes in Morality

The reader may well expect, in view of the findings of the preceding section, that there were few complaints from Kabloonamiut parents of their children learning to "talk dirty," steal, lie, "be sneaky," drink or smoke. This was true; the reasons again are obvious. Much of this "immoral" behavior is very common in the communities in which the

Kabloonamiut live, and is, in fact, common among the children there. Thus the likelihood is that the child has begun to learn it in his own community. What the parent discovers is that the hostel school authorities are more able to curtail this behavior in their children than they themselves are. As a result, the Inuvik schooling experience is more likely to reduce the incidence of this behavior in Kabloonamiut children, rather than increase it as in the case of the Nunamiut children.

Cultural Changes

As in the case of the physiological, social psychological, and moral changes the cultural changes which the Kabloonamiut children experience are neither as drastic nor as disruptive as are many of the changes which the Nunamiut children experience. In the first place, almost all of the children do speak English. White learnings in science, social science, and literature come more easily to Kabloonamiut children since they have had some of the experiences which are presumed by the Alberta curriculum, through their greater exposure at home to white magazines, movies, and other mass media.

It seems probable that the curriculum will seem less unreal and irrelevant to the Kabloonamiut child than to the Nunamiut child. There is far more continuity between the life he lives at home and in the hostel. He is far more likely, to speak the same language, to wear more similar clothing, to eat similar foods, to live in more similar facilities, and to enjoy similar recreations at home and school, than the Nunamiut child. The points of sharp contrast between the two situations are reduced to three: having different associates, following different schedules, and encountering different disciplines. Thus the "two game" approach to life, which we suggested was inescapable for Nunamiut children, is far less so for Kabloonamiut children.

Further, the Kabloonamiut children are not as inescapably caught between the expectations of parents and home community, and the dreams of the future cultivated by the school as are the Nunamiut children. Most of the Kabloonamiut parents are already engaged in wage work. They no longer hold the conception of the son's obligation to work with his aging father and so to support his parents. They are far better prepared and more willing to have their children follow the path of opportunity, wherever it may lead.

Finally, unlike the Nunamiut child, the Kabloonamiut child is not caught up without warning in a popular adolescent sub-culture which is positively dangerous to his ability to survive in his home environment. He would learn much of it whether he attended residential school or not for it is generally present in his own home community through

exposure to the mass media of the southland. But since his work opportunities and his home and community facilities are more similar to southern communities than are those of the Nunamiut, the undermining of traditional Arctic clothing customs is not as dangerous as it is in the Nunamiut communities.

The diseducative and dangerous potential in the adolescent subculture is thus considerably attenuated in the case of the Kabloonamiut.

Summary

We have considered some of the physiological, social psychological, "moral," and cultural changes in both Nunamiut and Kabloonamiut children which result from their attendance at the residential school at Inuvik in the Canadian Arctic. We have seen that many of the changes which do take place are welcomed and appreciated by the Kabloonamiut parents. Little disorganization results from the boarding school experience, either for the child, his parents, or for the community in which he lives. The children usually experience no physiological changes. The disorganizing aspects of white culture they have experienced, or they would have experienced in their home communities. And in the residential school they do acquire habits and disciplines which largely make for improved adjustment in their homes and home communities.

But this is not true of the Nunamiut child. It is scarcely an exaggeration to suggest that for most of the Nunamiut children the schooling which they currently receive tends to be disorienting and diseducative. They are made unfit to live in the land camps which are their homes, in terms of attitudes, motives, and skills, but they are not adequately prepared to make a successful transition to wage work in town. A preference for the "good life" of the hostel is easily learned. But most are not able to learn what it takes to be a dependable skilled worker who is able to earn an adequate standard of living in town during the few years most attend school. It is from this group that many of the frustrated, hostile, and deviant young people, described by Clairmont,[3] are recruited.

FOOTNOTES

1. F. G. Vallee, *Kabloona and Eskimo in the Central Keewatin*. Ottawa: Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, (1962), p. 185.
2. John Dollar, *Frustration and Aggression*. New Haven: Yale University Press, (1939).
3. D. H. J. Clairmont, *Deviance Among Indians and Eskimos in Aklavik*, N. W. T. Ottawa: Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre, Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, (1963).